

## COMM 310 online discussion - Importance of News

Here are links to assigned readings + one Netflix episode (let me know if you do not have access to a Netflix account). For this discussion, please watch/read in this order:

First watch the Netflix episode of ["The Patriot Act by Hasan Minhaj"](#) about the dying local news industry (\*NSFW warning for lots of cursing!) and read the Washington Post perspective, ["The audacious lie behind a hedge fund's promise to support local journalism."](#)

Then read the Washington Post opinion, ["The crisis in local journalism has become a crisis of democracy."](#) which paints a bleak picture about the dire consequences of declining local news coverage, plus the first part of the ["Minimally Adequate" series](#) from the P&C about inadequate and unfair resources provided in our state's public schools.

Finally read the [op-ed by Fox News' Chris Wallace](#).

Now consider these questions :)

1) As a college student who may/may not care a lot about the local news, consider the problems presented by these three sources - the Netflix show and the two Washington Post perspectives on local news. How could you imagine this being a problem in the near future as you graduate and begin "living in the real world?" What happens if there are no reporters to inform you about the community - rising costs, health news in the area, corruption in local government, etc.? Do you see this issue as a problem for "democracy" - why/why not?

2a) Considering the "Minimally Adequate" series, what would be the danger of people not knowing this kind of information? If this award-winning series is never published, what happens 5, 10, 20 years from now in our cities, local economies, schools because it was never revealed?

2b) In addition to just being "important information" for SC residents to know about the state of our education system, comment on the storytelling in "Minimally Adequate" - how do the anecdotes and the writing add to the stats and facts?

3) Two main reasons a lot of people don't pay attention to the news are that a) it seems uninteresting/boring; and/or b) it seems biased (or is perceived as such). Chris Wallace of Fox News makes great points about the danger of attacking the media while also noting that news outlets can do themselves some favors by presenting the news better - less sensational and extreme as well as less politically charged one side or the other. (\*side note: he rightfully criticizes some NYT headlines or CNN reporter questions but ironically does not point out obvious political takes from his own, now former, network. However, his overall point is very valid and what I want you to focus on).

First, what do you think of his viewpoint (what do you agree/disagree with), and second, thinking of this opinion along with the decline of reporting at outlets across the country, how do you think

your own news consumption could improve to support journalism that matters and is important for the overall health of our democratic society?

You must put **your answer to the questions in your assigned small group by midnight on Tuesday, Feb. 1.**

You must then **reply to each person in your group by midnight on Thursday, Feb. 3.**

Finally, **you need to submit a relatively short (5-6 sentences) review of the discussion to the OAKS dropbox by Monday, Feb. 7, at midnight.**

- Note: I do not want you to rehash YOUR answers to the original questions; I will already see those :) Instead, I want your takeaways about the discussion itself - what stood out to you as interesting comments from others that may have been the same or different from your own observations; what takeaways from the discussion did you have?